

prices. I know, talking with my family, home this weekend—folks were looking at me, saying: What in the world is going on? What can be done?

We have put together legislation multiple times to address it, short term and long term, as it relates to gas prices which are so outrageously high. But over and over again we are blocked. Why? Because the oil companies do not like it. That is what this is about. Unfortunately, the oil companies do not want to see us move in the direction of being able to tackle issues of whether there is, in fact, price gouging; whether there are in fact issues around speculation; whether we are going to have competition with alternatives to oil. They do not want us to do that. They do not want us to tackle the issue of the tax subsidies they receive.

What we see instead of action, as we could have had today, we see this past week oil prices at \$140 a barrel, almost twice the price from last year. It is almost twice the price from last year, and OPEC says it could be \$200 this year. Think about that when you are trying to get to work, trying to maybe take the kids to camp for that week or maybe trying to go to the grocery store or go looking for work or maybe take mom or dad or the kids to the doctor. We are talking about a huge burden that is building up and up.

Unfortunately, while gas prices now go over \$4 a gallon, we are seeing an effort to, one more time, block common-sense efforts to do something about it for the families of America. Unfortunately, on the other side of the aisle, there has been a desire to make sure that we continue big oil tax breaks rather than addressing what our families need. Last year the big oil companies pocketed \$124 billion in profits. It is fine to make a profit. We want companies to do well, to make a profit. But we also want to make sure when that is happening they are reinvesting in the economy, reinvesting in creating more supply. We want them to be reinvesting in new energy. Unfortunately, that is not happening.

We also want to have tax policy that makes sense in terms of where we want to invest in new technologies. The oil companies are doing pretty well, I suggest, right now. I do not think my tax money or your tax money or the tax money of any of the folks here or any of the folks around the country needs to be used to incentivize big oil, which is exactly what is happening right now.

They are doing pretty well. We have been trying and we have been blocked through Republican filibusters, to take away subsidies, taxpayer subsidies for oil companies and move them over to subsidize new, growing industries, green options, alternative energy—wind, solar, advanced battery technologies, consumer tax credits to buy the next generation of vehicles, the next generation of appliances. Those are the kinds of tax credits that encourage people to focus on energy effi-

ciency and conservation in their homes, those things that will move us in the right direction. That is what we have been trying to do. And we have been blocked.

The bill that was stopped also creates a permanent tax on windfall profits for the major oil companies. If they are not going to invest in America and invest in our future and buy the next airplane or put it into more big bonuses, then we need to have a windfall profits tax that will redirect those dollars back so we can take them and invest in the future.

I see our distinguished leader on the floor and I am going to suspend for a moment, if I might. I know he has some important business he needs to do.

I yield to our leader and ask that I later be recognized to continue my comments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate very much my friend from Michigan allowing me to do a little business here on the floor of the Senate. She is such a tremendous Senator. I had the good fortune to be able to be in Michigan this weekend with her and Senator LEVIN. What a team they are. The people of Michigan realize that. It was a wonderful experience, being there with these two Senators.

The State of Michigan has lots of problems. No one articulates it better than Senator STABENOW, talking about what is happening to our country with the loss of manufacturing jobs. Of course, sadly, Michigan is a poster State for what is happening in the loss of manufacturing jobs. This is something we must stop, stop the hemorrhaging of these manufacturing jobs.

I had the good fortune yesterday of meeting with the National Association of Manufacturers. They recognize, although they have been a Republican organization in years past, that they are going to have to start working with us. That doesn't mean they will not keep working with the Republicans—of course they will—but we have to start working together and realize the bad shape of our manufacturing sector.

MOTION TO PROCEED WITHDRAWN—S. 3044

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I withdraw the motion to proceed to S. 3044.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. 3101

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that S. 3101 be modified with the changes at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on behalf of the Republican leadership, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

MEDICARE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PATIENTS AND PROVIDERS ACT OF 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to S. 3101, the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act. This is an act of 2008. I ask we proceed to this on Wednesday, June 11, following the period of morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, on behalf of the Republican leadership, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to S. 3101.

I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 772, S. 3101, the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008.

Harry Reid, Max Baucus, Jon Tester, Barbara Boxer, Benjamin L. Cardin, Bernard Sanders, John F. Kerry, Patty Murray, Maria Cantwell, Blanche L. Lincoln, Ken Salazar, Charles E. Schumer, Ron Wyden, Patrick J. Leahy, Jeff Bingaman, Debbie Stabenow, John D. Rockefeller IV, Jack Reed.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now withdraw the motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

CONSUMER-FIRST ENERGY ACT OF 2008—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to S. 3044.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, before our leader leaves the floor, I thank him for his patience and tenacity to continue, despite objection after objection, as we try to govern on behalf of the people of this country—whether it be addressing issues of global warming, whether it be gas prices, whether it be what just happened, which is to bring forward a Medicare bill that will stop a large cut to physicians all around the country and affect our ability to have access to health care. It is a bill that includes the ability to focus on rural health care and telehealth and e-prescribing and a number of things that will increase access to health care.